

## Castilion Primary School

Document control table	
Title	Academy closure in the event of severe weather conditions - guidelines
Date approved	January 2024
Date updated	January 2024
Approved by	TLT
Date of next review	January 2025
Updates/revisions included:	NA

### Introduction

The APAT Board of Trustees recognises its duty in ensuring the smooth operation of the timetable in its academies at all times. It is recognised however, that on occasion the normal day-to-day running of the academies may be interrupted due to severe weather conditions.

In circumstances such as these, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all in our academy community. These guidelines are provided by APAT but include local guidance as relevant.

#### 1. Pre-notification and information for staff and parents:

As the autumn term progresses and/or the National Weather Centre predict deteriorating weather conditions for our region, parents and staff are reminded of academy procedures in case of bad weather. These guidelines are also placed on the academy website.

#### 2. Procedures in the event of the enforced closure of the academy due to severe weather conditions:

Before a decision is made whether the academy should open or not (enforced closure), consideration should be given to

- the distance staff must travel
- road/traffic conditions and
- local conditions for staff who travel on foot. In addition, consideration should also be given to
- the condition of the academy site and
- surrounding area for parents and pupils who may have to travel on foot.

Once all the above have been considered the following procedures should be put into place:

- a) The Principal will consult with Trust Leaders, premises manager or and school leaders
- b) The Principal will decide based on the outcome of the above consultation and local guidance (outlined below) bearing in mind the following options:
  - Closure for the full day
  - Closure at 12.00 noon and/or the arrangements for school dinners
  - Late opening e.g. 10am to allow time for staff to arrive
  - Opening at 1pm for the afternoon session

- c) The Principal will instruct the office manager to:  
inform parents via direct communication systems
- contact school transport companies as relevant
  - contact supply staff recruitment agencies
  - update OpenCheck
- d) The Principal will add the information to the academy website.
- e) The Principal will inform SLT, Premises Manager and the Office Team to contact line managed staff to inform staff and communicate Principal's instructions regarding activities for staff and/or ask that time be spent preparing for future lessons/activities where appropriate. Given the accuracy of weather forecasting, it is not unreasonable to expect staff, including administrative staff and learning support staff, to plan for the possibility of not being able to attend should severe weather be predicted.
- f) The Principal will inform the Trust Leaders (CEO, CFOO or DoE) of the final decision. The Academy Trustees will also be informed of closures at their meeting.
- g) The Principal will ensure that should the academy open, the provision of staffing in place is in accordance with health and safety legislation, bearing in mind pupil / teacher ratios, job descriptions and correct procedures for staff covering other classes, playtime arrangements, heating and lunchtime provision.

## **GUIDANCE NOTES: Closure of APAT academies in adverse weather conditions**

1. The responsibility for academy closure rests with the Principal in agreement with the TLT. The aim should be to keep academies open if this is at all possible taking full account of the health and safety of staff and pupils.
2. All academy staff should make every reasonable effort to reach their academies in adverse weather conditions. Consideration will be given to the nature of journeys staff must undertake, road conditions, the physical fitness of the individual and the availability of public transport. Should it be considered that a member of staff has not made every reasonable effort to reach the academy, e.g.  
when roads are open and traffic problems minimal, absence may be counted as unpaid leave.
3. There will be members of staff of some academies who already have health problems and for whom the struggle through adverse weather could be positively harmful. It is reasonable for Principals to ascertain which members of staff may be so affected and to consider authorising them to be absent for the duration of exceptionally severe weather conditions following guidance from Trust HR.
4. Principals should ensure that appropriate plans have been made to cover the possibility that they cannot reach their academies after making every reasonable effort. They should instruct, by telephone, the teachers who have managed to reach their academies to act on their behalf.
5. Principals and staff who have reached their academies should stay there if the physical conditions in the academies are satisfactory even if there are not many children in attendance.

Staff who are not required to teach should use their time in preparatory work/in service training/syllabus revision/administration etc – see section 2, d) above.

6. If the number of staff reaching any academy is adequate to cope with the number of pupils who have arrived, and if the academy is heated, then the MAT would expect the academy to remain open. Individual Principals must decide if the number of staff present is adequate to allow appropriate supervision. These pupils (even if their numbers are small) should be provided with appropriate work and should be kept at the academy as long as the physical conditions are satisfactory and staff are available.

If it is impossible to provide school meals such pupils could be sent home at lunchtime providing appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure an adult is at home to receive them.

7. Principals are responsible for making the necessary arrangements following the decision to close including the informing of parents and other agencies as appropriate e.g. transport.
8. Principals MUST ensure that the APAT Home Learning Policy is followed to provide online learning if closure occurs.

**As the weather changes and diverse weather is predicted, Principal's will send the letter below to parents/carers to inform them of the procedures the academy will take.**

Dear parents,

#### **Academy procedures in the event of severe weather**

As the weather is now changing there is always the possibility of adverse conditions. Could we please appeal to you to ensure your child comes to academy equipped with a coat and hat to accommodate the cold weather and winds that may affect our playground. I would like to take this opportunity to advise parents of the procedures we have in place.

##### a) Procedures for the start of the day

Every attempt will be made to open the academy as normal during adverse weather conditions, but as a number of staff have substantial distances to travel to the academy this may not always be feasible. Where it is impossible to ensure the health and safety of the children a decision will be made by the Principal to either close or delay the start of the school day. Wherever possible any such decision will be made by 8.15am and parents will be notified by the usual communication system. As it is not always viable to meet this deadline, I do ask that parents use their discretion and either keep their children at home or personally bring them to the academy and wait with them until a firm decision can be made.

##### b) Procedures for deteriorating weather throughout the day

Should the weather deteriorate as the day progresses and parents are concerned about the health & safety of their children, they should use their discretion and if appropriate, collect them from the academy. The academy does not close, it remains open until the last child safely leaves the building. We ask that parents do not telephone the academy to check this as the telephone lines may be needed in the event of an emergency.

Details of academy closure will also be added to the academy website.

Should you need further clarification of any aspect of the above, please do not hesitate to speak to me at the academy. Meanwhile on behalf of Amadeus, may I take this opportunity to thank you for supporting our policies and procedures, which ensure the health & safety of all in our academy community.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs Y. Bishop  
Principal

